

The Architect and Key Craftsmen for St Edward's Church, Kempley

Arthur Randall Wells (1877 – 1942)

Randall Wells, the son of an architect, was born in Hastings. In 1901 – 02, he worked with William Lethaby as his resident architect for All Saint's church at Brockhampton-by-Ross, where Lethaby's experimentation with the direct employment of labour under a site architect, and few drawings, gave Wells freedom to evolve the design as the building rose and to engage in the physical activity of building. In parallel to collaborative projects with other architects, Wells developed an independent practice. He built the **Church of St Edward the Confessor, Kempley** as a chapel-of-ease (1903-4), for the **7th Earl Beauchamp**. It has similarities to All Saints, Brockhampton and to St Andrew's, Roker, which it pre-dates. St Edward's, described by Betjeman as "*a mini-cathedral of the Arts and Crafts movement*", was built under his direction from local materials by local labour. He subsequently worked on many other projects including building modifications at **Madresfield Court**.

Ernest Gimson (1864 – 1919)

Gimson was born in Leicester in 1864, the son of an engineer. He studied at the **Leicester School of Art** and at 21 years had gained some experience working in an architect's offices. He was inspired by William Morris who recommended him to **John Dando Sedding** for whom he worked for 2 years. He developed an interest in craft techniques, especially using natural textures and surfaces, naturalistic detail of flowers, leaves and animals, always drawn from life; he believed in a close involvement of the architect in the simple processes of building and in the supervision of a team of craftsmen. Sedding's offices were next door to the showrooms of Morris & Co., providing opportunity to see at first hand the flourishing of Arts and Crafts design. He met **Ernest Barnsley** at Sedding's office and, through him, **Sydney Barnsley**, a friendship that was to last the rest of his life. Through the **Art Workers' Guild**, he became interested in a more hands on approach to traditional crafts, and in 1890 spent time with **Philip Clissett** in **Bosbury**, learning to make rush-seated ladderback chairs.

Gimson and the Barnsley brothers moved to the rural region of the Cotswolds in 1893 "to live near to nature". Under the patronage of the Bathurst family they settled first at **Pinbury Park**, near **Sapperton**, on the Cirencester estate. In 1900, they set up a small furniture workshop in Cirencester, moving later to larger workshops at **Daneway House**, a small medieval manor house at Sapperton, where he stayed until his death in 1919. He strove to invigorate the village community and, encouraged by his success, planned to found a Utopian craft village. He concentrated on designing furniture made by craftsmen working under his chief cabinet-maker, **Peter van der Waals**, whom he engaged in 1901.

Ernest & Sidney Barnsley

Ernest Arthur Barnsley (1863 - 1926) was born in Birmingham and met **Gimson** at Sedding's offices. He became the public face of the craft community on the Bathurst estate, directing the renovations at Pinbury Park. In 1900 he moved into a

partnership with Gimson, opening a furniture workshop Cirencester; the partnership was dissolved acrimoniously in 1903 at the time of Gimson's move to Daneway House. Ernest Barnsley then returned to architectural work. His largest project was Rodmarton Manor, near Cirencester, completed by **Jewson** in 1929 and held by some to be the last great country-house built in England.

Sidney Barnsley (1865 – 1926) studied at the **Birmingham College of Art** before going on to the **Royal Academy School of Architecture** (1885-87) and then to the **British School at Athens** (1887 – 89) where he studied Byzantine Architecture. He designed and built a Byzantine-style church in Lower Kingswood, Surrey before turning his attention to furniture design. He joined Gimson and his brother Ernest at Pinbury Park and worked closely in architectural and furniture design with Gimson even after the defection of his brother. His son (Ernest, 1900 – 1987) followed in his father's footsteps and became one of the most important furniture makers of the 20th century.



Sidney Barnsley, Lucy Morley, Ernest Gimson, Alice and Ernest Barnsley
with their two daughters at Pinbury Park, 1896

Peter van der Waals (1870 - 1937)

Peter Waals was born in The Hague, Holland. His uncle was Johannes Diderik van der Waals, who was awarded the 1910 Nobel Prize for physics. Waals trained as a cabinetmaker in The Hague then worked in Brussels, Berlin and Vienna. He went to London in 1900 intending to gain another year's experience before returning to the Netherlands. He was introduced to Gimson in London in 1901 and offered the position of foreman/manager of the new workshop in the Cotswolds. He accepted the offer and spent the rest of his life in the Cotswolds setting up his own workshop after the Daneway Workshops closed.

David Gibb

Little is known about David Gibb other than that he is reputed to have come originally from Glasgow. He worked in London and was the last carver of ship figureheads. He was commissioned by Wells to carve the statues of Christ, St Mary and St John which grace the Rood Beam in St Edward's Church.